



California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection  
Office of the State Fire Marshal  
California Incident Data and Statistics Program

## California Emergency Incident Data Collection History and Procedures

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In 2000, the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) began transitioning from collecting data via the California Fire Incident Reporting System (CFIRS) to a system that collected data in compliance with the nationally-recognized National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS). The transition was complete on December 31, 2002. Data is submitted to the OSFM, California Incident Data & Statistics (CalStats) Program by roughly 500 California fire departments, including CAL FIRE. Information is collected in a modular/paperless format. Timely reporting of NFIRS compliant data to the OSFM fulfills any reporting requirements of federal grants, and upholds California Health & Safety Code 1311.05.

The first step to NFIRS compliant incident reporting is to **contact the CalStats Program Manager, Jennifer Bowman at (916) 208-8025** or by email at [Jennifer.Bowman@fire.ca.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Bowman@fire.ca.gov) to request a Fire Department Identification Number and to create and activate an account for your fire department.

The Program Manager will provide you with all the information you need. The information is also available on the NFIRS website: [www.nfirs.fema.gov](http://www.nfirs.fema.gov). Your department will need to decide whether to purchase a vendor software or use the free Federal Client Tool Software, also known as the Data Entry Tool (DET), provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). If you are interested in purchasing software, there is a list of vendors available on our website <https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/divisions/wildfire-prevention-planning-engineering/california-incident-data-and-statistics-program/>. If your department decides to use the free software provided by FEMA, complete information regarding the use of the software, including the hardware requirements and the necessity of internet capabilities is explained at [www.nfirs.fema.gov](http://www.nfirs.fema.gov). Once your account is activated, you will be able to log into the NFIRS website under the User Section to download and install the free software according to your database type, following the directions in the "USFA NFIRS 5.0 Data Entry Tool User Guide," which is also available for download on the NFIRS website.

California fire departments work in an off-line mode of the NFIRS 5.0 DET software. Because we work in an offline system, internet access is only required at initial set up and for periodic updates and reactivations of accounts. Data is retained on the hard drive of the computer until it is exported and sent to the OSFM at the end of each quarter. Data sent to the OSFM is validated and imported into the CalStats Database (formally known as CAIRS data warehouse) along with the data submitted by all other fire departments in the state. Annual statistics reports and Public Records Act (PRA) requests are pulled from this database. California data is exported from the CalStats database and sent to FEMA on an annual basis.

Procedures for downloading and installing the NFIRS DET, the "user injection" procedure (required before entering your department's activities off-line), exporting data, and working in the off-line mode are some of the procedures explained in the guidelines available for download [www.nfirs.fema.gov/users/usersdocs.shtml](http://www.nfirs.fema.gov/users/usersdocs.shtml). For assistance with these procedures contact the CalStats Program Manager notated above.